

THE DISTINCTION BETWEEN CRIMES AND SINS IN QURAN

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The prohibited acts in Quran are subject to a separation in terms of their legal effects. The first group involves acts that involve an infringement of individual rights such as homicide, theft, fraud, robbery, etc. These acts are considered as crimes and are punishable by public authorities. The second group involves such prohibited acts that do not involve an infringement of individual rights such as gambling, drinking, fornicating, taking interest on loans or disobeying God in various religious duties like praying, fasting, dressing modestly, etc. These acts are considered as sins and are punishable only by God Himself in the afterlife. Attempts to prosecute or legalize such acts based on a non-secular approach with links to Islam or Quran are both illegitimate for violating basic human rights and inconsistent with Quran for violating many verses that enjoin freedom of thought and faith.

Quran protects human rights which are generally stated as life, liberty and property in the modern literature. It states the following on the right to live:

“Do not kill any soul which God has made sacred, except with a valid ground. If someone is killed unjustly, We have given his next of kin certain authority. But he should not be excessive in killing, for he will be supported.” (17:33)

“Whoever kills a person -unless it is for murder or corruption in the land- it is as if he killed the whole of mankind; and whoever saves it, it is as if he saved the whole of mankind.” (5:32)

These two verses show that human life is sacred and cannot be violated unless there is a valid ground. It implies that the safety of everyone is endangered once this rule is bent. It additionally specifies that the valid grounds can only comprise of punishments for murder and crimes against public order leaving no need for further explanation.

Quran states the following on freedom and the right to liberty:

“There is no compulsion in this system.¹ Rights and wrongs are clearly distinct. Whoever renounces evil and trusts in God has grasped the most trustworthy handle, which does not break. God listens and He knows.” (2:256)

“The Messenger’s sole duty is to convey.” (5:99, 16:35, 24:54, 29:18)

¹ This famous verse is often translated as “no compulsion in religion”. However, the word “din” in Quran has many meanings other than religion. In a broad sense, it signifies a set of rules and values. When it is attributed to human beings, it means the value system of the individual. When it is attributed to certain people of authority such as a king (like in verse 12:76), it means the rules/regime of that king. When it is mentioned with definite article (ال) like in this verse, it means the rules/system of God i.e. natural law (see verses 30:30, 9:36 for other examples in this sense).

"Their guidance is not your responsibility. God guides whoever wishes to be guided."
(2:272)

"You are only a reminder. You have no control over them." (88:21-22)

"You cannot guide whomever you like, but God guides whoever wishes to be guided and He knows best those who are guided." (28:56)

"Had your Lord willed, everyone on earth would have believed. So will you now compel people to become believers? No soul can be a true believer except by God's leave; and He lays disgrace upon those who refuse to understand." (10:99-100)

These verses state that nobody may be forced to any belief or conduct without his/her consent and it shall be void if done so. Anyone who believes that others are wrong has only one legitimate right (and responsibility) which is to express what he/she believes the right thing to do. God emphasizes in many verses that He is the only one who may judge people on these issues.

Quran also includes a phrase about freedom which might be interpreted with a pretty modern concept called the negative liberty. The concept of negative liberty denies any idea of liberty that obliges others to certain duties. It argues that people are not obliged to an action but to refrain from some in order to maintain liberty. Individuals are free so long as they are safe from arbitrary intervention by others.² The following verse might be arguing about such an approach on liberty:

"Believers! Do not say lead us (like a herd),³ but say watch over us. Listen! (...)" (2:104)

The difference in these phrases is very similar to the difference between the theories of negative and positive liberty. The verse declares that believers should expect from their leaders to watch over them rather than leading them to certain ends. It disapproves an expectation of the latter.

The interpretation of this verse in terms of politics may be that people ought to demand the duty of a watchman from their government but not the duty of a leader who decides what everyone should do for everyone else. In such a case, the decisions in social and economic life are taken by the individuals and hence the verse tells them to "listen", implying the negative freedom would only prove to be fruitful in a conscious and educated society.⁴

Quran states the following on the right to property:

² For further information about negative liberty, see: Isaiah Berlin (1969), "Two Concepts of Liberty" inside "Four Essays on Liberty", Oxford University Press, pp. 118-134.

³ The word (رَاع) here means to lead the herd.

⁴ Famous philosopher Edmund Burke states the following on this issue: "What is liberty without wisdom and without virtue? It is the greatest of all possible evils; for it is folly, vice, and madness, without tuition or restraint." See. Edmund Burke (1790), "Reflections on the Revolution in France", p.203. (<http://socserv2.mcmaster.ca/~econ/ugcm/3ll3/burke/revfrance.pdf>)

“Believers! Do not acquire/consume each other’s properties illicitly, but trade by mutual consent, so that you won’t kill yourselves. God is so merciful towards you.” (4:29)

This verse declares that all transactions not based on mutual consent are null and void. Consent therefore is prescribed as an essential condition on the validness of economic transactions.

The existence of consent depends on the parties’ capacity to act above all. Minors for example lack the legal possibility to give consent since they do not have the capacity to act. But on the other hand, the capacity to have rights starts earlier. So minors can own property but there is no legitimate way for that property to be transferred to another party until the minor comes of age. The relevant verse states as follows:

“Do not go near the orphan’s property, except with the best of intentions, until he has reached his maturity. Honor your pledges, because pledges involve responsibility.” (17:34)

The property of a minor can only be used by his legal guardian with only the best of intentions and in the minor’s interest unless the guardian is impoverished. The relevant verse states as follows:

“Test the orphans until they reach the age of marriage. If you find them to be mature enough, hand over their properties to them. Do not consume it extravagantly or hastily lest they will grow up and take it back. The rich shall refrain, but the poor may use it fairly. Have it witnessed when you hand over their properties to them. In fact God is sufficient in taking account.” (4:6)

Quran disallows an intervention in people’s property other than such exceptional cases. Violations of property rights are called “theft” in civil sphere and “tax” in official sphere. Both of them are a type of confiscation in principle. Since the institution of tax is allowed with certain measures in Quran, a limited tax may be levied on property in order to finance certain public expenditures. This is called *zakat* and all other kinds of tax are illegitimate in terms of Quran.⁵

Let us dwell on the issue of tax a bit more since it is the most widespread example of the violation of property rights in today’s world.

Tax may be direct or indirect. One of the most subtle ways of indirect taxing is printing money. Governments that print money via central banks cause a devaluation of money (i.e. inflation) and a decrease in its purchasing power. This is also a violation of property and Quran defines it as a corruption.

“(…) Give full measure and weight. Do not diminish the value of people’s property. Do not corrupt in the land once it has been set right. This is better for you if you are believers.” (7:85)

⁵ See verses 9:60 and 9:103 in Quran for rules concerning tax and legitimate public expenditures.

“Give full measure and weight. Do not diminish the value of people’s property. Do not cause harm in the land by corruption and mischief.” (11:85)

“Value with accurate measure/criterion. Do not diminish the value of people’s property. Do not cause harm in the land by corruption and mischief” (26:182-183)

Considering the usage of the concept of corruption for signifying crimes against public order in verse 5:32, it can be argued that generating income by diminishing the value of people’s property is regarded as a financial crime against the public in terms of Quran.

Other relevant verses are as follows:

“Weigh with accurate scales and value with accurate measures/criteria. That is fair and with the best outcome.” (17:35)

“Woe to the defrauders. When they take a measure from people, they take in full. But when they measure or weigh for others, they cheat.” (83:1-3)

Quran is extremely sensitive on the violation of property rights. It defines redistributing wealth other than *zakat* -which is enjoined by God Himself- as somewhat stepping into God’s shoes.

“Is it they who allocate the bounty of your Lord? It is We who have allocated their livelihood in this life. We elevated some of them in rank above others, so that some of them would take others in service. The bounty of your Lord is better than what they collect.” (43:32)

This verse shows that the redistribution of wealth is -in principle- against Quran. The only exception to this rule is the legitimate tax obligation mentioned above. Quran also determines the areas of public expenditure in order to prevent the state from expanding.

“Receive contributions from their wealth to purify and develop them with it. Support them. Surely your support comforts them.” (9:103)

“Those contributions are only for the poor, the financially limited, the ones who work in this, the settlement of disputes, the ones who are deprived of freedom, the deeply indebted, the expenditures of defense and transportation. This is your duty to God. God knows and decides rightfully.” (9:60)

This verse disincludes welfare expenditures like education, healthcare, etc. The meaning of this is that it is not legitimate per se that governments may establish and run schools and hospitals with taxpayers’ money. These services should be provided by the private sector like any other service in the market under normal circumstances.

The enumeration of public expenditures in Quran in fact delegitimizes the unmentioned expenditures and hence limits the coercive intervention in people’s property by the state along with verse 4:29. We can argue based on these verses and the verse that

condemns the redistribution of wealth (43:32) that Quran disapproves ideas like social justice and the social/welfare state.

Consequently, the violation of natural rights specified as life, liberty and property by arbitrary grounds constitutes a contradiction to Quran. Unlawful interference can only be regarded as legitimate in case of being a response against another.⁶ Hence the essential condition of a legal sanction in Quran is a violation of one's rights by the perpetrator.

We will now handle some of the acts that are considered as crimes in Quran with their prescribed punishments. We will then handle the acts that are not considered as crimes but as immoral acts with the moral sanctions awaiting their performers.

⁶ See Quran 2:190, 42:40.

A. SOME CRIMES IN QURAN

1. Homicide

Quran states the following on homicide:

“Believers! Retaliation is prescribed for you in cases of homicide, be the perpetrator free or slave or female. Whoever is forgiven by his brother should pay the reasonable demand with good will. This is your Lord’s mitigation and mercy. Whoever crosses the line from now on will be the subject of a painful torment.” (2:178)

“Whoever kills a person -unless it is for murder or corruption in the land- it is as if he killed the whole of mankind; and whoever saves it, it is as if he saved the whole of mankind.” (5:32)

“Never should a believer kill another believer, unless by error. Anyone who kills a believer by error should free a believing slave and pay compensation to the victim’s family, unless they remit it as charity. If the victim belonged to a people who are hostile to you, but is a believer, then the compensation is to free a believing slave. If he belonged to a people with whom you have a treaty (peace), then compensation should be handed over to his family, and a believing slave set free. Anyone who lacks the means must fast for two consecutive months as repentance to God. God knows and decides rightfully.” (4:92)

“Whoever kills a believer deliberately, the penalty for him is Hell, where he will remain forever. God will be angry with him, and will banish him from mercy, and will prepare for him a terrible punishment.” (4:93)

These verses show that homicide is a crime and one that will cost the perpetrator’s life if done deliberately. The punishment may be converted into blood money and be paid according to the precedent. The punishment for manslaughter is only blood money. Perpetrators must additionally free a person who is deprived of his freedom or fast for two consecutive months as repentance to God, but this is a religious duty which cannot be forced.

2. Theft

The underlying principle of criminal law in Quran is “equivalence” between crimes and punishments.

“The punishment of a wrongdoing is nothing but its equivalent. Whoever pardons and makes reconciliation, his reward lies with God. He does not like the unjust.” (42:40; See also 10:27, 40:40, 6:160, 28:84, 27:90, 16:126, 22:60)

The reflection of this principle on crimes against life is either retaliation or blood money. Its reflection on crimes against property is a criminal fine equivalent to the value of stolen property. For example, if someone is caught for stealing a property of X value, he is to return the stolen property and be fined by the same amount. This is petty larceny. The important point is that the fine is paid not to the government but to the victim.

There is also the qualified theft. A theft is qualified if,

- 1- The act involves malice,
- 2- The act involves knowledge and skill,
- 3- The property is preserved,
- 4- The property is valuable,
- 5- The perpetrator is not in a state of need,
- 6- The perpetrator has no right on the property,
- 7- The perpetrator commits or risks committing other crimes on the process.⁷

Qualified theft is a type of financial crime against the public that entails aggravated punishment. Modern legal systems penalize it with imprisonment which is not a type of punishment in Quran. Quran states that it should be penalized with corporal punishment in addition to the standard “repayment plus equivalent fine” which is to be taken from the perpetrator and given to the victim.

“As for the thief, whether male or female, cut their hands as a penalty for what they have reaped and as a deterrent from God. God is Mighty and Wise.” (5:38)

We will dwell on this punishment briefly because of the debate on its practice.

The word “cut” in this verse is commonly interpreted as cutting off the hand from the wrist. However, there is another verse in Quran that talks about cutting hands in a different way.

“(...) She gave each one of them a knife and then called out Joseph: Come out before them! When they saw him, they marveled at him so much that they cut their hands. They said: Good God, this is not a human. This must be a precious angel.” (12:31)

The words are exactly the same in these two verses, but the act of cutting is synonymous to injuring/wounding here. This semantic difference of cutting exists in almost every language. Therefore it is possible to interpret the verse 5:38 as a demand of injuring the perpetrator’s hands by marking them with a significant symbol which shows that he once attacked the property rights of people in a qualified manner and tried to obtain properties not by legitimate means but by stealing. The difficulties in the perpetrator’s social and economic life since then will deter anyone with similar intentions.

⁷ All of these qualifications are deduced from a case of qualified theft reported in chapter Joseph. It is possible to come across this distinction of petty larceny and qualified theft among almost all legal systems.

3. Adultery (Marital Infidelity)

Considering that marriage is a contract between two individuals, one can argue that adultery or marital infidelity is a breach of contract. The inherent term of a marriage contract is the parties' promise to each other on not to have sexual relations with someone other than the other party. Adultery is regarded as a violation of this term and hence a violation of the other party's rights. It is therefore considered a crime.

The relevant verse states as follows:

"As for the adulteress and the adulterer, hit them a hundred times, and let no pity towards them overcome you regarding God's Law if you believe in God and the Last Day. Let a group of believers witness their punishment." (24:2)

According to the principle of equivalent punishment in Quran, we may argue here that the punishment is still equivalent to the crime. Those who commit adultery obtain something illegitimately which is not tangible. They gain illegal pleasure by their bodies. So the sanction involves pain in the body. They also hurt their spouses by cheating on them so they are to be hurt equivalently. They disgrace their spouses in the eyes of others so they are to be disgraced before public. These interpretations seem to be helpful in understanding the nature of this punishment with regards to the principle of sanction equivalence.

The main purpose of this punishment is not to inflict grievous bodily harm to the perpetrator, but to give him/her an equivalent pain and to disgrace him/her before the public just like he/she disgraced his/her spouse, children, relatives and everyone he/she knows by committing adultery. It is also important that the public is informed about his/her marital infidelity (just like marking the hands of the thief).

4. False Accusation / Malicious Prosecution

Quran states that false accusation is a felony and is subject to punishment since it is a malicious prosecution. It is also a public offense as it involves a misuse of the public right of access to the courts. Quran gives the example from false accusation of adultery.

"Those who accuse married women and cannot bring four witnesses are to be hit eighty times. Do not ever accept their testimony again. They are dishonorable sinners." (24:4)

The principle of sanction equivalence reflects in cases of malicious prosecution by returning the legal penalty to the accuser. The accuser wished that the victim would be hit a hundred times even though he/she is innocent, so the accuser should be hit a hundred times instead. But the court cannot simply disregard the accuser's allegation even though no evidence is provided to support his/her claim. Quran states that the claimant should provide four testimonies supporting his/her claim apart from his/her own amounting to a total of five testimonies. The court has no capacity to accuse the

claimant of lying since he/she may simply be mistaken but not necessarily lying. So one fifth of the punishment is to be mitigated and the accuser should be penalized with eighty strikes instead.

Slandering someone without bringing it to trial is not considered as a crime unless it results in a material damage. Lying about someone is a moral defect that entails moral sanctions. Quran gives a true story as an example on this:

“Those who perpetrated the slander are a band among you. Do not consider it bad for you, but it is good for you. Each person among them bears his share in the sin. As for him who played the major role, there will be a terrible torment. Why, when you heard about it, the believing men and women did not think well of one another and say: This is an obvious lie? Why did they not bring four witnesses to testify to it? If they fail to bring the witnesses, then in God’s sight, they are liars. Were it not for God’s favor upon you and His mercy in this world and the afterlife, you would have suffered a great punishment for what you have ventured into. When you rumored it with your tongues and spoke with your mouths what you had no knowledge of, you considered it trivial; but according to God, it is serious. When you heard it, you should have said: It is not for us to speak about this, no offence, but this is a serious slander.” (24:11-16)

As is seen, the verse only talks about moral sanctions regarding the act of slander since it is not brought to trial and therefore not turned into a criminal offense.

5. Bribery

According to Quran, bribery is the act of providing benefit to officials for the purpose of influencing their behavior to the interest of the briber at the expense of some other individuals. It is a criminal act which entails a penalty on both the giver and the taker, equivalent to the loss they cause on the third parties. The instances which do not cause harm for the third parties (those that originate merely from misfeasance), the officials are to be prosecuted while the bribers may be excused for being forced to it.

The relevant verse states as follows:

“Do not acquire each other’s properties illicitly, nor offer it as a bribe to officials in order to acquire part of other people’s properties deliberately and sinfully.” (2:188)

The officials who take bribes lose their merit to serve as a public officer.

“God instructs you to appoint those with merit to public authorities and when you judge between people, to judge fairly. (...)” (4:58)

Quran states that many of the scholars and reverends exploit people by illegal activities like bribery.

“Believers! Many of the scholars and reverends acquire people’s properties illicitly and hinder them from God’s path. (...)” (9:34)

B. SOME SINS THAT ARE NOT CONSIDERED AS CRIMES IN QURAN

Certain sinful behaviors like disbelieving or ignoring God (kufr) or associating other beings with Him (shirk/polytheism) are slammed in Quran.⁸ Those who adopt such attitudes are terrorized with horrible punishments in the afterlife. However, it is not possible to come across in Quran a legal sanction prescribed for such behaviors. Although *shirk* and *kufr* are the greatest sins, Quran finds moral sanctions sufficient as a reaction. One of the relevant verses is as follows:

“When you hear God’s revelations being ignored or ridiculed, do not sit with them until they engage in some other subject. Otherwise, you will be like them. God will gather the hypocrites and the faithless altogether in Hell.” (4:140)

Another example of big sins is the failure to pray God. The following verse considers failure to pray God as a sin so close to polytheism:

“(…) Perform the prayers. Do not be of the polytheists.” (30:31)

There are verses that declare the failure to pray God entails serious punishments in the afterlife:

“What drove you into this fire? They will say: We were not of those who prayed. Nor did we feed the destitute. We used to indulge in other things with those who do the same. We used to deny the Day of Judgment until the inevitable came upon us.” (74:42-47)

Although the situation of those who default on praying God is so serious, yet there is no legal sanction prescribed against them. So it seems that not every sin is considered a crime in Quran and the heaviness of God’s criticism on an act is not a reason per se for thinking that such acts should be illegal.

The following verse identifies gambling, idolatry, divination and using intoxicants as examples of immoral behavior and requires believers to desist from such acts.

“Believers! Intoxicants, gambling, idolatry and divination are dirty works of the wicked. Avoid them, so that you may prosper. Wicked people want to provoke strife and hatred among you through intoxicants and gambling, and to prevent you from remembrance of God and from prayers. Will you not desist?” (5:90-91)

Assuming that the acts above should be illegal is actually at odds with what is being said. The phrase “will you not desist?” would make no sense if these acts are illegalized. In fact the verse requires desisting from such acts by one’s own will.

The following verse forbids giving money to irresponsible people:

⁸ *“God will not forgive to be associated with anyone but will forgive any sin less than that for those who wish (to be forgiven). Anyone who associates others with God strays into far error.” (4:116)*

“Do not give the irresponsible your money which God has given you as subsistence. Provide food and clothes for them instead, and speak to them with kind words.” (4:5)

Despite all of these expressions are in imperative form, none of them can be subject to a legal process, because the verse is not about a legal regulation but a moral regulation.

Hence there is another verse in Quran that deals with the very action this verse forbids.

“Believers! When you incur a debt for a certain period of time, write it down. Have a scribe write in your presence fairly. Let no scribe refuse to write as God has taught him. So let him write and let the debtor dictate. Let him fear God, his Lord, and diminish nothing from its value. If the debtor is irresponsible or weak or unable to dictate, then let his guardian dictate fairly.” (2:282)

The possibility of a debtor to be an irresponsible person depends on the liberty of others to violate the previous verse by lending to irresponsible people. Only when such details are considered, one can see that there is a distinction of crimes and sins in Quran which can be revealed by analyzing the relevant verses.

The following verses forbid lending with interest:

“The ones who earn from interest act like those who are under the effect of wicked people. That is because they say, ‘trade is the same as usury’ while God has permitted trade but forbidden usury. Whoever receives the advice of his Lord on this and quits may keep his past earnings. His case rests with God. Whoever continues will be the dweller of that Fire wherein he will abide forever.” (2:275)

“Believers! Fear God and forgo what remains of the loan on interest, if you are really believers.” (2:278)

The verses address directly to those who earn from interest and asks them to quit it. But there is no verse in Quran that charges public authorities to impose a sanction on the perpetrators of this act like that in the verse about theft. This shows that it is regarded merely as a sin, but not a crime. In other words, according to Quran, everyone has freedom to commit the sin of earning interest, be him/her a muslim or not. It cannot be prosecuted based on religious grounds because there can be no compulsion in religion or any other aspect of personal life. Compulsion can only be used against crimes.

The following verses command that carrion, blood, pork and the animals sacrificed in the name of something other than God are not to be eaten.

“He has forbidden you only carrion, blood, pork and what was sacrificed in the name of something other than God. But if anyone is compelled, without desiring or exceeding, he commits no sin. God is forgiving and merciful.” (2:173, 16:115, 5:3, 6:145)

Similarly, these verses put no one in charge to monitor, investigate or prosecute those who disobey these orders.

The following verses forbid unlawful cohabitation and require others to disapprove them:

“Do not come near adultery. It is immoral and an evil way.” (17:32)

“Find four witnesses among you for those of your ladies who commit lewdness. If they testify, confine them to the homes until they pass away or until God opens another way for them. Reproach the couples among you that do the same. But if they repent and reform, leave them alone. God is the forgiver of the repentant and He is the merciful.” (4:15-16)

The legal sanction prescribed against illicit intercourse in verse 24:4 (corporal punishment and public humiliation) is only valid when at least one of the parties is married. The parties both being single decriminalizes the act since nobody's rights are violated. It turns the act into a sin which merely shows the moral corruption of the people in question in terms of Quran and therefore the only legitimate reaction could be a moral sanction like a disapproval and reproach.

All of these behaviors are among those forbidden by Quran while giving no orders on making them illegal, imposing legal sanctions on the perpetrators, etc. Illegalizing such behaviors based on religious grounds is illegitimate on three grounds;

1. Quran does not give such an order,
2. It is against basic human rights which are preserved by Quran itself,
3. It serves exactly the opposite of what is intended by destroying the opportunity of people to follow Quran in avoiding such behaviors voluntarily.

Those who even want to obey Quran would be obeying the government instead. Besides, it becomes very hard to understand who is capable of disobeying God in a society where all sins are illegalized. Such a society would be one in which most people become a hypocrite by being forced to commit (what is perceived as) sins secretly and can never feel certain about others' thoughts.

There are many more examples of Quranic provisions which are non-actionable in legal terms. It is impossible and unnecessary to discuss all of them. Moral judgments and moral sanctions are much more than legal ones in Quran which makes it more realistic indeed. A society can exist and survive without a legal system and a government, but it cannot exist or survive without a moral code. Morality is a natural institution which exists where humans exist and it is the most effective determinant of the political, economical and legal structure of the society. Quran's reference to morality instead of law in building a healthy society, its reference to civil society instead of authority and its reference to persuasion instead of coercion is therefore so natural and well-directed.

C. CONCLUSION

The ancient terminology of Islamic Law decorated with various legal concepts caused serious confusion on the areas of law and ethics in the minds of the religious. When this problem is further aggravated by radical ideologies based on religion, the most convenient environment for the emergence of despotic/totalitarian states and organizations have been created. The biggest obstacle before liberty and justice today is the authoritarian perceptions of religion and the legal/political realities based on it. The underlying problem of this obstacle is the confusion of the areas of law and ethics in scriptural literature.

The deductive approach of believing people on their religious texts and their intention to set up the society from top to toe based on their religious understanding is nothing but a reflection of the prevalent totalitarian theories on religious social scientists. It is not a problem endemic to the followers of Islam either. Interpreting every “don’t do” in the religious text as “don’t allow” is a product of the same constructivist rationalist mindset that underlies every totalitarian ideology like fascism, socialism, communism, etc. Hence it is not a problem about theology in particular but a problem about mentality. In the case of Islam, this mentality reveals itself in the concepts of Islamic Law such as *halal* (lawful) and *haram* (unlawful).

The following verse seems to criticize this very mentality and jargon:

“Do not say ‘this is lawful’, and ‘this is unlawful’ by the pretty lies of your tongues in order to attribute your lies to God. Those who attribute lies to God will not succeed.” (16:116)

Muslim societies today are the manifestations of this verse. Instead of integrating in the world and offering realistic solutions for current problems, they are enslaved to the literature of so-called Islamic sciences, hooked on the nationalist ideologies that demonize successful societies, became localized and kept out of the world’s agenda as a consequence. So muslim societies have to make peace with the experience of humanity as a whole and raise themselves as world citizens. God states that He won’t change their situation unless they change what is within themselves.

“God does not change the situation of a people until they change what is within themselves.” (13:11)